



# Canterbury more than just tales . . .

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Tucked away in a quiet corner of south-east England lies the city of Canterbury, which celebrates a history more than 1,400 years old. Canterbury was occupied by the Romans in the 1st century AD. In the late 6th century it became the capital of Ethelbert, king of Kent.

The town subsequently became a Saxon religious and cultural centre before it was raided periodically between the 8th and 11th centuries. The Danes burned down the cathedral in 1011. During the 16th century French and Flemish protestant refugees introduced the textile industry to Canterbury.

**Saint Augustine:** In the spring of 597 AD, Augustine and forty followers arrived on the Kent coast. Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to re-establish Christianity in southern England. When the party arrived in Canterbury they were welcomed by the pagan king of Kent, Ethelbert, and his Christian Queen Bertha. Augustine's mission was accomplished in a short time because by the end of the year 10,000 Anglo-Saxons and their King had embraced Christianity.

**Cathedral:** One of the most notorious events which took place in Canterbury cathedral was the slaying of Thomas Becket on the altar steps by King Henry II's henchmen in 1170. Becket was chancellor of England and archbishop.

The king is alleged to have said, "Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?" And so they went to the cathedral to carry out their master's wishes.

The site of the cathedral originally had an old Roman church on it. This church



**Canterbury Castle**

was given to St. Augustine by King Ethelbert in 598 AD.

St. Augustine was Canterbury cathedral's first archbishop, and today the cathedral is the administrative centre of the Church of England with an archbishop who is also the Primate of All England.

The original building was destroyed by fire in 1067 and was rebuilt in the Norman style between 1070 and 1180, with additions being made in the 15th and 19th centuries.

**Spooky Canterbury:** The new Canterbury Ghost Tour takes to the streets and uncovers some of the ghostly secrets locked within the city.

Among the stories are legends surrounding the murder of St. Thomas Becket and the story of Nell Cook and the curse of the dark entry.

Tours are offered on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights April-August and start at 6:30 p.m. outside the Canterbury Tales Visitor Attraction on St. Margaret's Street.

The price for adults is £4 and £3 for children.

**Queen Bertha's walk:** A permanent walk has been created, linking the three parts of Canterbury's World Heritage Site: the cathedral, St. Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's church. The trail commemorates the route taken by the Christian wife of King Ethelbert of Kent daily for 35 years to pray at St. Martin's church, hence the name "Queen Bertha's Walk."

**The Canterbury Tales Visitor Attraction:** Step into the 14th century to encounter Chaucer's pilgrims and hear their famous tales of chivalry, romance and intrigue. They are full of surprises.

(Editor's note: In last week's article, an incorrect phone number was given for the Ministry of Defense Police. The correct number is (01638) 523784.)

## Around the area

### Dover Castle:

Perched high on the famous White Cliffs of Dover stands one of the largest and most complete fortresses in Britain. It has a history dating from the Iron Age to beyond the Second World War. Visit the secret wartime tunnels which contain the World War II operations centre and see where the evacuation of Dunkirk was masterminded. Dover castle is open daily 10 a.m.-6 p.m. April 1 to Sept. 30, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 1 to Mar. 31. Closed Dec. 24-26. Adults £6, children £3. Call (01304) 201628 for further information.

### Battle Abbey:

With as much myth as known fact surrounding the conflict of the Battle of Hastings in 1066, it is thought that town of Battle is the site where the famous battle was fought and the defeated King Harold may have fallen at the spot which is now the ruins of Battle Abbey, built by King William to atone for the blood spilt. Battle Abbey is open daily 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mar. 31 to Oct. 31, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 1 to Mar. 31. Closed Dec. 24-26. Adults £3.50, children £1.80, family ticket (2 adults and 3 children) £8.80. Call (01424) 773792 for details.